



The Lab Notebook

Memories of a Busy Autumn at Edison



The Edison Conours d'Elegance LLC presented a spectacular display of vintage automobiles on the Glenmont grounds October 18. More pictures are on pages 3 and 4.

The Friends of Thomas Edison NHP held their Second Annual Muckers' Ball, a festive get-together, on Saturday, October 3. Photos of the event are on page 5.



Special Visitors: Former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and her husband, former astronaut Mark Kelly visited the Park to take a look at some items that Captain Kelly took into space and later brought to the Park. Details are on page 6.

Message from the Superintendent

As we end the calendar year I would like to thank each and every one of you for a great year at the Park. By all metrics it was a banner year of programs presented and projects completed. We took big steps in our educational programs, using technology like never before and engaging children from across the country and around the world. Major programs and new initiatives by the Park and its partners also grew audiences for us: Edison Day/West Orange Street Fair; Concours d'Elegance; Glenmont Fall Family Fun Day; and Holidays at Glenmont were just a few of the major events occurring at the Park this year. The Park's visitation rose a couple thousand over recent years and we received our visitor survey results from 372 visitors (a 93% response rate). **Fully 99% expressed overall satisfaction with facilities and programs.** Topping it off, we were recently identified by AAA Northeast as the #8 top selfie spot, competing with such attractions as Niagara Falls and the Brooklyn Bridge!

Our success is the result of a team approach to our work. I am personally grateful for the 74 volunteers who contributed **6,816 hours** to the Park. Without their efforts it would be very difficult to accomplish everything that we do year in and year out. As we turn the page on 2015, we usher in the kick-off of our Centennial Year! The projects, programs, and events that we have scheduled will certainly make the year memorable for our staff, volunteers, and visitors. I am proud to serve with all of you and look forward to another great year at Thomas Edison National Historical Park!

Sincerely,

Tom Ross

Thomas Edison National Historical Park was established to preserve and protect Thomas Alva Edison's West Orange Laboratory, home, and collections for the education and inspiration of people worldwide.

Thomas Edison National Historical Park
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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Volunteers Contribute 6,816 Hours in FY 2015

Our volunteers and interns contributed 6,816 hours to the Park during the fiscal year that ended on September 30. This is an increase of 16% over volunteer hours in FY 2014. Thanks to our new volunteers this year who helped us increase and improve visitor services, education programs, archives and collections management, park administration, care for the gardens and Greenhouse plants at Glenmont, and general maintenance support: Carlos Aguirre, Bailal Boyd, Jack Boyle, Alice Creviston, Linda Davis, Bob Donnelly, John Edreich, Lara Giletti, Jane Harris, Joe Kaiser, Margalit Kirzner, Ann Krishnan, Suresh Krishnan, Lynn Lopes, Avery Rappa, Lisa Siracuse, Emily Storm, Chris Sudol, Pat Thomas, Jessica Wehner, and Les Williams.



FY 2014: Total Volunteer Hours: 5,873; Total Volunteers: 68
FY 2015: Total Volunteer Hours: 6,816; Total Volunteers: 74

Our high-achievers this year were:

Gaye Olin, 382.25 hours	Arthur Gordon, 359 hours
Tom Hilmer, 300.25 hours	Eric Faeder, 296.5 hours
Evelyn Gurland, 276 hours	Bill Hagmann, 263 hours
Harvey Cohen, 254.25 hours	Joe Kaiser, 238 hours
Amy Trimarco, 206.5 hours	Carlos Aguirre, 194.5 hours
Les Williams, 189.5 hours	Ann Krishnan, 171 hours
Mark Wintle, 166.75 hours	Margalit Kirzner, 164.5 hours
Emily Storm, 155.5 hours	Jackie Messineo, 153.5 hours
Yvan Beausoleil, 136.5 hours	Nancy Farley, 133.75 hours
Nick Azulay, 118 hours	Suresh Krishnan, 102 hours

Special thanks to everyone who volunteered at Thomas Edison NHP this year!

Glenmont Garage Looks Both Old and New

For many years, the Garage's interior appearance was largely defined by old and failing finishes, with paint flaking severely from walls and ceilings. In 2015 the Edison Innovation Foundation generously donated funds to restore

the interior walls, ceiling, and woodwork to their original appearance. Little documentation indicates what finishes were in place between 1908, when the Garage was built, and 1931, the year of Edison's death. The interior walls and ceiling were returned to the 1908 buff color palette because it seems likely that it was continued into the 1920s.



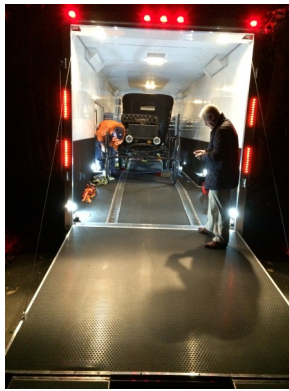
Joint lines show where the main doors were inserted into the wall forms.

Contractors removed loose, flaking paint but retained paint that was well-adhered to the walls and woodwork. This preserved a record of the historic paint finishes. Simply re-painting the concrete walls and ceiling would quickly result in peeling. For a long-term solution, conservators determined that application of a cementitious skim-coat would last longer and also convey an accurate representation of the historic interior.

When loose paint was removed, original form lines became visible. The building was constructed using wooden board forming techniques, and these joint lines represent placement of the wooden beams that created the form. In effect, it is a 3-D blueprint that illustrates how the building was constructed. Boards were of different widths, usually parallel to each other, but not always, and windows and doors were crudely inserted into the main wall forms. During the restoration process, the contractor repeated the original joint lines over the new cementitious coat to retain this unique documentation.



Charles Edison's 1936 Brewster Ford Town Car and his father's 1922 Ford Model T Touring Car on display.



The arrival. Unloading autos from their trailers at Eagle Rock.



Saturday afternoon. Participants gather for a reception atop Vault 12



Starting early Sunday morning, the drivers and their automobiles made their way down Eagle Rock Avenue, through a side entrance to Llewellyn Park, then onto the Glenmont grounds.



The great lawn starts to fill with gleaming motorcars.





Their cars positioned on the lawn and ready for viewing, Concours participants assembled for tours of the Glenmont home.



Do you remember a Chevy like this one?



1916 Winton Hearse.

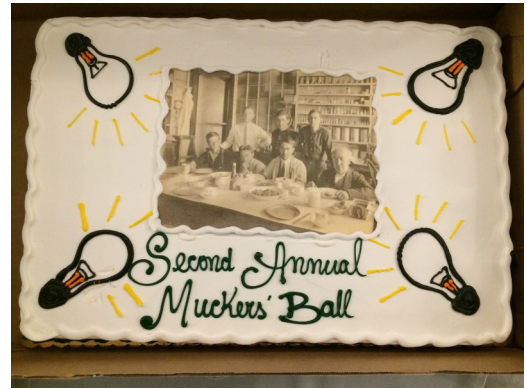


Best of Show. American Division: 1934 Packard V-12 Aero Coupe by Lebaron (left). European Division: 1937 Horch 853 Sport Cabriolet by Voll & Ruhrbeck (right).

Prize winners drove up to receive their trophies, passing under the porte-cochère just as visitors to the Edison home would have done a century ago.

A Second Annual Muckers' Ball

The Muckers' Ball, sponsored by the Friends of Thomas Edison NHP, is not only an evening of food, fun, music, and dressing up, but also an opportunity to recruit new members to the group. Since the last issue of *The Lab Notebook*, Jack Boyle, J. Stuart and Rosiland Brown, and E.T. Arnn and Mary Boyle joined the ranks. Welcome and thanks.



Before dinner, Superintendent Tom Ross leads a tour of the Machine Shop in Building 5. The Friends hope to raise funds to restore the driveshafts that supplied power throughout the Shop.



Under the big top.



Mucker Hap Bojsza at the microphone.



Special Visitors

In late September retired U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and her husband, retired astronaut Captain Mark Kelly (USN, ret.), paid a visit to the Park. Capt. Kelly had taken an American flag and one of our Edison cylinders ("Come Josephine In My Flying Machine") on his 2001 trip. He later returned the cylinder and donated the flag to the Park.

The flag became part of a collage (at left) that includes photos of the crew and a shoulder patch bearing crew members' names.

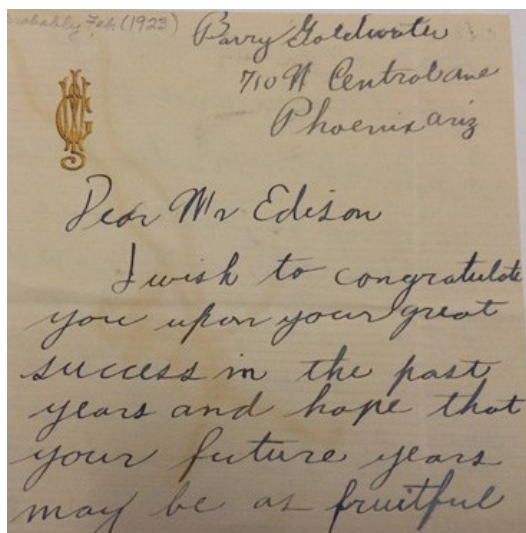
The legend at the upper right reads: "This United States flag and accompanying Amberol cylinder were flown aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavor*, STS-108, December 5-17, 2001. Presented to the Thomas Edison National Historic Site from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the crew of the Space Shuttle *Endeavor*." /signed/ Mark Kelly, Pilot.



Rep. Giffords photographs a fan letter (below) sent by a 14-year-old Barry Goldwater to Thomas Edison. Both she and Goldwater represented Arizona in Congress.



Capt. Kelly in the Archives Reading Room holding the Edison cylinder he took into space. On the table is a Barritt-Serviss *Star and Planet Finder*, an astronomical chart from our collection.



The first page of a letter from young Barry Goldwater to Thomas Edison.

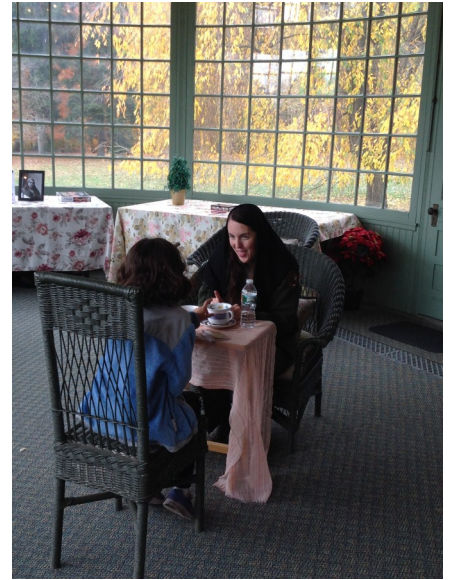


Rep. Giffords and Capt. Kelly pose for a photo under the Main Street arch—as so many visitors did with Mr. Edison—along with Superintendent Tom Ross, Chief of Interpretation and Education Karen Sloat-Olsen, and Assistant Superintendent Terri Jung.

Fall Family Fun Day, November 7



Leaves placed on treated paper produce prints, replicating the first photographic methods of the mid-nineteenth century.



Glenmont curator Beth Miller is reading tea leaves for a young visitor. Really!



Building bird feeders from cones, pipe cleaners, and peanut butter.



The obstacle course.



Family artists create watercolors of the house.



Identifying birds and leaves.

Christmas Arrives Early at Glenmont

Christmas came early to Glenmont, in the form of the newly conserved Edison family toys that recently returned from the NPS HACE (Historic Architecture Conservation & Engineering Center) conservation team. This project addressed flaking paint, rust, and failing leather. Today the toys are proudly exhibited under the Edisons' 12-foot Christmas tree in the Glenmont Den, a scene recreated for Park visitors every year in honor of the holiday season. The Den and the decorations displayed throughout the house represent Mina Edison's holiday decorating choices as documented in the vendors' bills in the Park archives.

"New" toys, found tucked away in closets at Glenmont, are on display for the first time. These include a ball toss game which might have been used on the lawn at Glenmont during the summertime and a miniature wooden wheelbarrow that makes the perfect gift for a small child. This display also includes some sports related toys such as the winter sleds that belonged to the Edison boys. Ice skates, perhaps used at the skating pond, and a rustic dollhouse are also on view. Of particular interest is the toy train set, complete with historic tracks that circle the bottom of the tree. This train set, purchased from FAO Schwarz in New York, even



One of the rusted train cars before...

includes a hospital car with tiny figures of patients that can be laid out on hospital beds inside the train car. Seeing these one-of-a-kind artifacts from the Glenmont collection makes a holiday visit to

Glenmont extra

special for the whole family and enables us to learn more about the hobbies and interests of the Edison children. Stay tuned for conservation projects next year that will reveal more information about Glenmont and its famous occupants.

...and after conservation treatment.



Glenmont Landscape Volunteers Receive Award for Excellence



On October 3, the Glenmont Project Committee of the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County received an Award for Excellence from the statewide Master Gardeners Association of New Jersey. Our volunteers, who make up the Glenmont Project Committee, have been restoring flowerbeds on the grounds of Glenmont since 2009.

Horticulture once flourished at Glenmont, but by 2009 only remnants of the extensive gardens remained. The Glenmont Project Committee, founded by Mary Jo Patterson and Amy Trimarco, began by reviving a large bed of cannas and creating a companion bed of perennials and annuals. Two years later, following



recommendations in the Cultural Landscape Report for Glenmont, they designed and planted a prominent oval flowerbed within the main drive. It now greets visitors through three seasons with a colorful mix of annuals and perennials.

They've also adopted smaller projects such as trimming wisteria and rhododen-

dron at the front of Glenmont, as well as planting Victorian-inspired plantings in two garden urns on the grounds. Thomas Edison NHP could not accomplish all of this work without them.

The Park is proud to partner with the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County. During these seven years, 36 Master Gardeners have volunteered 2,500 hours to rehabilitate and maintain flowerbeds and foundation plantings around the estate. Our special thanks and appreciation go to Amy Trimarco and Mary Jo Patterson who spearheaded these projects at Glenmont and continue to manage them today. We are grateful for their dedication and generosity in restoring the Glenmont grounds.

The Award for Excellence recognizes the contributions and service of volunteer members who trained and are certified under the Rutgers University Master Gardener Program. The Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County, a volunteer educational outreach program of Rutgers Cooperative Extension, is located in



Roseland, NJ. Master Gardeners participate in many volunteer programs throughout the county, and also respond to home horticulture questions through their Rutgers Master Gardener Helpline.

Some of our Master Gardener volunteers, above, 2011, below, 2015.



Edison Joins Microsoft's Education Global Skype-a-Thon



On December 3rd and 4th Thomas Edison National Historical Park participated in Microsoft's Global Skype-a-Thon. Classes from six different schools took a virtual tour of the Park accompanied by a ranger. Half the schools were right here in the United States, but the others were from countries from around the world. We had a session with a groups of students from Mexico City, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, and, from over 8000 miles away, Bangalore, India. All totaled, we "travelled" over 13,000 miles and talked to 226 students in those 2 days.



Carmen during a recent Skype session with a class from India.

This is a great way to connect teachers and students to our parks and to bring our parks into their classrooms. To be able to talk to a park ranger takes us to an even higher level of adopting technology in our parks. Ranger Carmen Pantaleo reports, "The interaction and the questions I had with the students and teachers were amazing. Questions ranged from what Thomas Edison was doing here to what it was like to be a park ranger. Since we have started doing Skype in the Classroom it has opened our park to students and teachers who may have never had a chance to visit.

"If schools can't get to us we need to bring our park into their schools. What better way of doing this than with Microsoft Education and Skype in the Classroom."

Mather Students Visit Edison, Get Their Hands Dirty

Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship High School (located at 439 West 49th Street in New York) is a new Career and Technical Education high school for hands-on skills-training in the specialized building arts and landscape trades, focused on high-quality craftsmanship and historic preservation. Partnering with the National Park Service—which is committed to protecting the nation's 400+ national parks, monuments, cultural and historic sites—students work directly in the trades of carpentry, masonry/plastering, decorative finishes and landscape management. By the way, Stephen T. Mather was the first Director of the National Park Service.

On October 27 two Mather 10th grade classes—55 students from a Building Arts I class and 60 students in a Landscape Management class—had their first field experience by visiting the Park. The Landscape students addressed treatment recommendations outlined in the Cultural Landscape Report of Glenmont, such as pruning shrubs, planting trees, and propagating historic plants.

The Building Arts class got an introduction to brick masonry and cast concrete construction. Students poured a small concrete "elevation" (in formwork constructed in class beforehand) and examined brick masonry in the laboratory buildings. Both classes took a tour of the laboratory buildings and collections before the end of their day-long visit.



Preservation Gets a Lift at the Labs



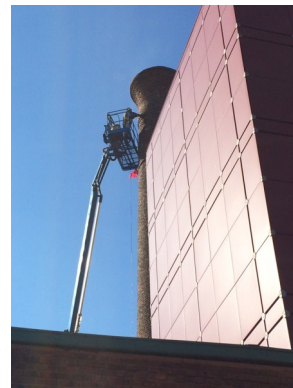
You may have noticed two boom lifts parked at the end of the laboratory courtyard. Contractors are repairing and preserving some high-reaching architectural structures on Buildings 5 and 6, the Building 6 smokestack chimney, and the water tower.

The historic lightning protection system on Buildings 5 and 6 has become detached, damaged, or deteriorated in many locations. The current project will preserve and repair these existing lightning components, replace deteriorated or missing components in-kind, return the system to operational condition, and upgrade it to comply with current safety code requirements.

Upon looking into the lightning protection system, contractors discovered deterioration at the top of the 80-foot tall brick smokestack chimney, including deteriorated and cracking brick mortar joints and displacement and cracking of the cast iron chimney cap. The chimney, no longer in use, served as the exhaust flue for the large boilers in Building 6 that provided power and heat to the laboratory buildings in Edison's day. The contractor will temporarily stabilize the smokestack chimney until permanent repairs can be made. Work will include installing ten steel tension bands around the circumference at various locations, selective raking and pointing of brick mortar joints, and installing metal flashing at the cast iron cap and two new lightning protection air terminals.

The pipe shroud on the 1922 water tower has become disconnected and displaced over its center leg. It rattles and moves in the wind, and a metal piece of the shroud fell 120 feet to the ground last year. The contractor will preserve, repair, and replace in-kind the existing water tower pipe shroud system hardware and components.

These projects should be completed by spring or early summer, depending on winter weather conditions.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Thomas Edison National Historical Park
211 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052

Join us for Holidays at Glenmont

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, through January 10.

(Tickets distributed at the Laboratory Visitor Center
on a first-come, first-served basis.)



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Volunteers-In-Parks Coordinator Thomas Edison National Historical Park

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www.nps.gov/edis Click on
"Support the National Park Service"

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...And Don't Forget...
**2016 will be a yearlong celebration of the 100th
anniversary of the National Park Service.**

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